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Viewing cable 07CARACAS444, LIKELY CHAVEZ RANTS IN ARGENTINA AND BOLIVIA

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07CARACAS444**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07CARACAS444	2007-03-02 18:41	2011-08-30 01:44	SECRET	Embassy Caracas

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/2011/05/05/113760/wikileaks-us-venezuela-even-fought.html>

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 000444

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SUBJECT: LIKELY CHAVEZ RANTS IN ARGENTINA AND BOLIVIA

REF: BUENOS AIRES 000384

Classified By: ACTING POLITICAL COUNSELOR DANIEL LAWTON,
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

¶11. (S) Summary. President Chavez announced February 28 that he will visit Argentina and Bolivia starting on March 9-10, the same time that the President is visiting Brazil, Uruguay, and Colombia. Chavez is publicly criticizing the President's upcoming visit to Latin America and is helping organize anti-American protests in and outside Venezuela. The Venezuelan president can be expected to deliver further rhetorical attacks on the President and on U.S. foreign policy to try to divert public and media attention from the President's Latin America visit. We anticipate that Chavez will try to trumpet the Bolivarian Alternative" to free trade (ALBA) and Venezuelan aid to the region, criticize the World Bank, IMF and "savage capitalism", misconstrue U.S. interest in ethanol, as well as accuse the U.S. of "imperialism" in Iraq and Iran. While most of Chavez' comments are not likely to merit any response, the President's party may find targets of opportunities to counter Chavez. End Summary.

"This is Our House"

¶12. (U) Since the White House announced the President's March 8-14 visit to Brazil, Uruguay, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico, President Chavez has regularly criticized the President's upcoming travel to the region, calling it a "failure in advance" and "an effort to divide South America." Chavez announced in his February 28 radio address that he will visit Buenos Aires and La Paz at the same time that the President is in Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia, but denied his travel was a "conspiracy to sabotage" the President's visit. "Some want us to leave South America," Chavez continued, "but this is our house." Chavez invited Venezuelans to attend a "peaceful" march against the President's visit. Pro-Chavez organizations announced March 1 that they will organize a "Bush Out of Our America" rally in Caracas' Bolivar Plaza on March 8 and an "anti-imperialist" march on March 12.

¶13. (U) During his February 26 radio broadcast, Chavez predicted that the President would be confronted by protests on his trip like the violent protests against then Vice-President Nixon faced during his 1958 visit to Venezuela. He suggested the President would be met with "repudiation," but "hopefully the protests would not be violent." During his March 1 "Alo, Presidente" television broadcast, Chavez claimed that the President chose his travel dates because the USG thought Chavez would be in the Middle East, based on disinformation the BRV fed the CIA. He chatted via telephone with Bolivian President Evo Morales and jokingly suggested that both of them host the President for a summit in La Paz.

¶14. (S) Chavez is in a position to try to make his prediction of protests come true. Venezuela's embassies abroad actively promote, fund, and guide left-wing Bolivarian circles of persons sympathetic to Chavez' anti-American foreign policy. Chavez has almost certainly asked Venezuelan embassies in the region to generate protests against the President's visit, just as his government organizes such protests at home. According to sensitive reporting, the BRV is providing direct support to organize anti-American protests in Buenos Aires while Chavez is there.

The Chavez Songsheet

¶15. (SBU) With the caveat that predicting the behavior of the intemperate and mercurial Venezuelan president is never easy, we expect Chavez will once again try to secure international media attention through personal attacks on the President and

other senior USG officials. During his February 28 radio broadcast, Chavez referred to the President as "the biggest genocidal killer in history" and called the Deputy Secretary a "war criminal" and an "assassin." Chavez may even accuse the President of planning to assassinate him and/or invade Venezuela. Chavez frequently refers to the President by any number of insulting and offensive names such as "the little gentleman," "the drunkard," "Mister Danger," and following his infamous performance at the UN General Assembly, "Satan."

¶6. (SBU) ALBA vs. FTAA: Chavez can also be expected to promote his "Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas" (ALBA) and denounce regional free trade agreements with the United States. Chavez claims ALBA is a viable new system of integration based on "People's Trade Agreements," and "complementarity," instead of competition, but in reality ALBA's appeal to member-states Cuba, Ecuador, and Nicaragua is Venezuelan foreign aid. While in Buenos Aires, Chavez will almost certainly crow that he helped "bury" the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) when he attended the Summit of the Americas in Argentina in 2005. In Bolivia, Chavez will likely highlight Venezuela's flood relief as tangible proof of the BRV's Latin "solidarity."

¶7. (SBU) Viva Socialismo: The Venezuelan president continues to argue publicly that capitalism and key international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank are in crisis. During his on-air February 27 telephone conversation with Fidel Castro, for example, Chavez claimed that the IMF "cannot pay its salaries and is selling gold bars." In Buenos Aires and La Paz, he plans to promote the soon-to-be-established Bank of the South (BancoSur) as a more socially responsible alternative to the IMF. He can also be expected to promote his as yet vaguely-defined "Socialism of the 21st Century" and highlight his recent decisions to expropriate majority stakes in Venezuela's largest telecommunications company (CANTV), the electricity sector, and the mixed associations working in Venezuela's oil belt ("faja").

¶8. (SBU) Energy: Chavez appears irked at the fact that the United States is seriously considering alternative energy sources, including ethanol, which he clearly understands could enhance the U.S.-Brasil relationship. Venezuela exports over 50% of its oil to the United States, it's geographically natural and long-standing biggest buyer. Chavez has also falsely asserted that Venezuela has readily available markets to sell its oil to countries other than the United States. On February 27 and 28, the Venezuelan president asserted that it takes 20 million hectares of corn to produce a million barrels a day of ethanol for one year and suggested that producing ethanol would create food and water shortages (Note: Interestingly, Venezuela has agreed with Cuba to construct 11 ethanol plants in Venezuela). Chavez said March 1 that he plans to discuss his ideas for a gas pipeline running between Venezuela, Bolivia, and Argentina.

¶9. (SBU) Iraq and Iran: Chavez is likely to reassert that the United States is waging an "imperial war" in Iraq. After Saddam Hussein was hanged, Chavez fondly recalled his meetings with the former Iraqi dictator and suggested that the USG may be plotting to hang him. The Venezuelan president has personally led BRV efforts to forge a close alliance with Iran and has welcomed President Ahmadinejad to Venezuela two times in less than six months. Chavez alleges without proof that the USG is planning to attack Iran and the BRV continues to parrot Iran's claims that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

Comment

¶10. (C) Much, if not most, of Chavez's prospective comments are likely to be so outlandish that the President's party may not want to dignify them with a response. Chavez is often

his own worst enemy in that regard, just as his remarks to the UN General Assembly in 2006 helped doom Venezuela's efforts to secure a UN Security Council seat.

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